



Virginia Individual Development
Accounts Program

Invest in your future

Distributing Information to the Press

- Before distributing your press release, double check for errors, omissions or spelling mistakes. Have someone else read it also.
- Contact Sabrina Blackett, at (804) 371-7058 to get the latest statewide and local statistics to fill in to your press release.
- Make sure the spokesperson for your agency will be available for comment for the next several days.
- Try lining up a VIDA graduate or participant from your organization who is well-spoken, positive, and willing to talk to the media about their success.

Timing:

- Try to send your release early in the day for its best chance of getting noticed.
- Take note of what is happening in the news – if there is a strong news day, disaster or the media is preoccupied with a story, you may want to wait a few days *if the release can wait*.
- Mondays and Tuesdays are usually your best chances for a successful release. Fridays are usually the worst.
- Try to piggyback your story on a current popular topic if you can. If a local reporter has been reporting a lot on housing, education, or small business, you may give them a call to see if you can tag along one of your general releases onto their focus. This can be time sensitive and requires fast action on your part.

Press releases:

- Take a look at the media distribution list included in this kit. Note that some media outlets have broad coverage that may reach readers throughout a wide region where more than one intermediary serves. If you are preparing to submit a press release, contact your counterparts who are covered by the



Virginia Department of Housing
and Community Development
www.dhcd.virginia.gov

same outlets, and see if they are interested in partnering up for a release with you.

- Send the release to those on your list by fax or e-mail. Consider calling the reporter afterward to let them know you sent the release, and that you are available for more information should they be interested.

Calendar Announcements:

- Calendar announcements can and should be submitted to the media several weeks before the event. You will need to look at the media outlets in your area, and find the community calendar contact for that outlet and send it to them – not to the news contact listed in the provided media directory. To find out, simply look on their Web site or call the main number.
- The purpose of the calendar announcement is to have it published in community calendars – or perhaps even reported on – so that potential VIDA participants in the area may know about an open house or other type of event to which they might be interested in attending.
- Events advertised in calendar announcements should be open to the public.

Media Advisory's:

- Media advisory's should be sent to media one to two days before an event. Their purpose is to let media know that an event is happening, to provide them with information on what will be happening at the event (even a visual if possible), and who they can interview should they choose to cover the event.
- After submitting your media advisory, it might be a good idea to call your local media outlets to see if they have your event in their daybooks or on the schedule. They will most likely never promise to cover the event – depending on what kind of news day it is – but if you let them know how covering this event may affect their viewing audience – i.e. informing them about a program which may help them invest in their futures – they may be more likely to cover it.

Op/Ed's:

- Should you decide to submit an op/ed, simply send this to the op/ed editor in your local paper. Only send the op/ed to one paper, do not blast release it to the entire media directory.

- Include a brief bio of the person who is signing the op/ed for your organization, along with their phone number, e-mail address and mailing address at the bottom.

PSA's

- Distribute the mp3 files in this kit to radio stations in your area. You can e-mail it to them, or burn it onto the disk and hand-deliver it. Radio contacts are listed in the media contact list, and you may add more to this if you desire.

